

Synopsis of “**Indian One-Quarter Anna Postcard of 1902**”

Indian postal stationery is little collected and relatively unknown. This exhibit shows the One-Quarter Anna postcard issued during Edward’s reign. It served India proper, and was overprinted for use in the five Indian Convention States: those native states that signed a “Postal Convention” with the British Post Office to use overprinted Indian stamps and stationery. The exhibit shows the postcard, how it was produced, usages, and overprints for the States.

Indian stationery under Edward VII were manufactured in London and shipped to India where they were subjected to enormous extremes in temperature and climate. The climate of extremely hot summers (temperatures can reach 115 degrees F.) and wet winters greatly affect the condition of philatelic material. India has high levels of poverty and paper is often collected for sale to scrap paper dealers. India had a high rate of illiteracy and Indians did not write letters in numbers proportionate to the population. The survival rate of these postcards one hundred years old is not high.

Edwardian material is not commonly encountered – and is becoming more and more scarce. This is especially true for Edwardian Convention States stationery. While Victoria and George V had long reigns (46 years of Indian Stamps and 24 years of Indian stamps respectively), Edward’s reign was short. The first Edwardian stamps were issued in 1902, the postcard was issued in the same year, and he died in 1910. Postcards of George V were issued in 1912

Besides the standard catalogs of Indian stationery (Higgins and Gage, Mannik Jain, and Derek Lang) which identify the stationery and the dates published, and the catalogs of the Indian states stationery (Deschl, Meadows, and more recently Singhee in the pages of India Post 58 volume 38 - which is hard to decipher) which discuss the overprints, there is very little published.

The exhibit is presented chronologically

This exhibit represents over 20 years of collecting Edward VII postal cards. They were, to much of India, the face of the post office. Postcards were the cheapest way to communicate and millions and millions were used. The vast majority of these were not saved. Of those saved, the vast majority are commonplace. States’ overprints and anything other than simple domestic use (the intended use of the card) are hard to find.

Indian states are frequently ignored collectors of India as well as by most other collectors. Although there are a handful (less than 5) exhibitors who have exhibited Convention States material, their exhibits have been limited to stamps – not stationery. I am unaware of any exhibit in the US showing Indian postcards and never seen any other exhibit anyway with a focus upon Indian Edward VII postal cards.

The Convention States were small and, relatively speaking, very few postcards were prepared for them. The following table shows the relative sizes of the Convention States.

Population and Areas of the Convention States

State	Area (sq. miles)	Population 1931 <i>1900-1910 figures not available</i>	Country of comparable size (area)	Country of comparable population in 2005
Nabha	947	287,000	Réunion	Iceland
Jind	1,299	325,000	Between Samoa and Cape Verde	Maldives
Chamba	3,217	147,000	Between Puerto Rico and French Southern and Antarctic Lands	Saint Lucia
Patiala	5,942	1,625,000	East Timor	Botswana
Gwalior	25,041	3,523,000	Latvia	Lithuania

Significant and unusual items in the exhibit include:

Title Page	Proof of Embossed Die Specimen overprint
Page 2	Progressive Die Proofs
Page 3	Leads for printing – from the De La Rue archives
Page 6	Registered postcard with Acknowledgement Slip (1 Anna charge)
Page 8	Cancel of United Provinces Exhibition in Allahabad 1910
Page 15	Post cards showing amalgamation of Indore State with Indian Post Office: post card with Indore state stamp mixed franking before amalgamation and post card used in Indore after amalgamation.
Page 16	Only 20 th Century marking of RLB - Railway Letter Box <i>Written up in India Post issue 151, page 34.</i>